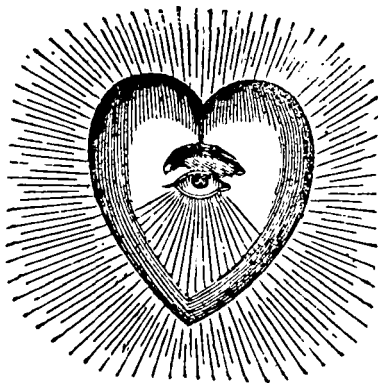


THE



SEER.

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, See Ye, when He
lifteth up an Ensign on the Mountains.—*Isaiah* XVIII, 3.

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No. 7.

THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF MAN.

(Continued.)

75. As the children of Adam were conceived in sin, and born into the world by the fall, they became subject to the same penalty, inflicted upon Adam, that is, they became subject to death, as saith the Apostle Paul, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. 5 : 12.) Also, in another passage, he says, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 21, 22.) These passages clearly prove that the sin of Adam brought death upon all his posterity. Was it just that all of Adam's children should suffer death because of his sin? Or did death come upon the children, not because justice required it, but as a natural result, following Adam's sin which could not be avoided? Misery and woe are frequently entailed upon posterity by the wickedness of parents. Diseases, contracted by the licentious conduct of parents, become hereditary, and are transferred to the children for many generations. Now the parents who, by their sins, brought upon themselves misery and wretchedness, suffer the penalty of their own doings as a matter of justice; they have been unvirtuous and sinned, justice punishes them with loathsome painful diseases: these diseases are inherited by the children; they suffer in body equally with the parents. No one will pretend to say, that justice requires the children to suffer; that these aggravating complaints are justly inherited: no one would, for one moment, suppose that justice could not be magnified nor exercise its claims, unless the children were afflicted for their parents sin. All would, at once, say that the sufferings of the children were unjustly inflicted, as a consequence of the sin of the parents; a consequence too, which could not well be avoided. So likewise, death came into our world by the transgression of our parents; they justly suffered that calamity; but death became hereditary. Adam transferred death to his posterity, not for any sin that they had committed, but as a consequence of his own sin. Adam was the means of their suffering death unjustly, as the legitimate consequence of his own sin. Justice, therefore, does not demand that any of the posterity of Adam should die, because of his sin. Justice demanded that Adam only should die. But the posterity of Adam do suffer death, not because justice requires it, but because death is hereditary, and follows as a natural result of the fall, in the same manner, as certain diseases are unjustly inherited by children, as a

natural result of the licentiousness of their parents.

76. Adam not only was to receive a temporal death or a dissolution of body and spirit, but he became dead spiritually; he was banished from the garden of Eden and from the presence of the Lord; he became subject to the will of the Devil by whom he had been overcome; he was dead as to every thing pertaining to righteousness or happiness; no act of his could ever atone for his sin; no plan that he could devise would ever enable him to recover himself from his lost and fallen state; no scheme that he could form would reorganize his body from the dust and bring it up from the grave. To dust his body must return, there, for aught he knew, to sleep the eternal sleep of death. No sound of redemption was at first sounded in his ears; no tidings to kindle a ray of hope within his breast: the darkness of despair sat coldly on his brow, while a never ending future opened its horrible gates to his hopeless vision. Death sat enthroned in his mortal tabernacle—and the spirit must be torn from its earthly covering, and bound in everlasting chains of darkness under the dominion of the fallen angels. The death passed upon Adam, then, was an endless death of both body and spirit—the body to moulder in dust to rise no more—the spirit to dwell in endless darkness and misery. This was the penalty, when considered separate and apart from the atonement.

But this is not all. Both a temporal and spiritual death was inherited by all his descendants. And if God had not provided a plan of redemption, all mankind would have been miserable forever, because of the consequences entailed upon them by the sin of their first parents; their misery and wretchedness would have been as great as though they themselves had committed the sin. Their spirits, though pure and innocent, before they entered the body, would become contaminated by entering a fallen tabernacle; not contaminated by their own sins, but by their con-

nection with a body brought into the world by the fall, earthly, fallen, imperfect, and corrupt in its nature. A spirit, having entered such a tabernacle, though it may commit no personal sins, is unfit to return again into the presence of a holy Being, unless there is an atonement made; hence, without an atonement all infants would have been endlessly lost, because of the natural consequences of Adam's sin. It is true, justice would not demand, that any spirit should suffer because of the sins of its parents, but the first parents brought this endless death of body and spirit upon their offspring unjustly, as a natural evil resulting from the fall that could not be otherwise. They suffer it, not as a penalty for Adam's sin, but as an infant suffers disease inherited through the unvirtuous conduct of its progenitors. If it should be supposed, however, that the spirits, being innocent, were forbidden to leave their habitation, and come down and enter into fallen tabernacles, under the penalty of spiritual death; and if it should also be supposed, that these spirits, being agents, came in violation of the law, then the nature of the foregoing reasonings would be, in some measure, changed, and each one would suffer, if it were not for the atonement, an endless spiritual death as a result of his own disobedience to the commandment not to enter a fallen tabernacle. But as there is no account of any such law being enacted, intended as a warning to spirits not to defile themselves by entering a fallen body, it therefore, must be concluded, that the death of both spirit and body are hereditary evils, entailed unjustly upon us by our first parents. These hereditary sufferings give us a knowledge of evil, the same as partaking of the forbidden fruit gave Adam a knowledge of the same principle. These hereditary sufferings also give us a knowledge of justice, in the same manner as Adam learned the nature of justice by suffering for his own transgressions. Adam caused his offspring to partake of the bitter un-

justly, and without their consent or agency, and they thus learn the nature of misery; while he, himself, learned the nature of bitter or misery justly as a penalty for his own sin.

77. In the preceding paragraph, we have examined the doleful effects, resulting from Adam's sin, when considered without any reference to the atonement; from which it will be perceived, first, that Adam's sin placed him and his descendants under the captivity and power of the Devil, wherein all mankind became spiritually dead forever; having perished from that which is good, they became subject to the will of the Devil, and thus became lost eternally. Secondly, that Adam's sin shut all mankind out from the presence of God no more to return. Thirdly, that Adam's sin brought death into the world, even the death of the body, or in other words, an eternal separation of body and spirit, the body returning to dust to rise no more, and the spirit remaining in chains of darkness to be happy no more. These fearful consequences resulted from the fall. From these consequences man could not redeem himself; the chains of everlasting darkness encircled him about, and he could not rend them assunder; he had lost all power and was in hopeless despair. But suddenly, a voice from on high penetrated the depths of eternal night with which he was surrounded; it was not the harsh voice of malicious fiends, grinning horribly at their captive victim; but it was the voice of mercy which broke harmoniously upon the ear; it was the voice of compassion which gently whispered, peace, to the despairing soul; it was the voice of hope—the voice of love—the voice of one bringing glad tidings of great joy—the voice of a compassionate Father, proclaiming Redemption through His Only Begotten Son. Despair fled away—Hope sprang up in the heart—Joy lighted up the countenance—and man by faith beheld himself redeemed through the death and sacrifice of the First Born; redeemed from that endless spiritual

death which was entailed by the fall; his body redeemed from an endless sleep in the grave; his spirit redeemed from an endless subjection to the power of the Devil. He beheld, by faith, the body restored from the dust—the spirit restored to the body—mortality restored to immortality—and man restored to the presence of his Father. Thus we see, that “in Adam all die” temporally, spiritually, and eternally; and that “in Christ all are made alive,” temporally, spiritually, and eternally, so far, at least, as the original sin is concerned.

78. Christ is the life and the light of the world. Without His atonement, no life nor light could have approached us; naught but eternal darkness, and death, and misery could have reigned. As all this misery came by the unrighteous acts of one man, even so, all the redemption, and light, and life, restored to the world, came by one Being who was as “a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” As the children of Adam had no agency in committing the original sin, even so, they are redeemed unconditionally, and universally from the effects of that sin, otherwise those effects would have never had an end. Redemption from the original sin was through Christ, that is, through free grace alone without works; no works were required of man in order that free grace might become effectual in his recovery from the effects of the sin of his first parents. None of the posterity of Adam, as a condition of redemption from that sin, are required to repent, or believe, or be baptized, or do any thing else; all conditions on the part of man, are entirely excluded. The atonement alone, without works, has made all mankind in their infant state, alive in Christ; hence the great wickedness of baptizing little children, for they are already free from Adam's sin because of Christ. Baptism was instituted as one of the conditions through which remission of our own personal sins, is granted because of the atone-

ment; but the atonement requires no baptism nor any other condition in order to remit the original sin or redeem us therefrom. The original sin was forgiven nearly six thousand years ago, or soon after it was committed; Adam was the one who committed the sin, and Adam was the one who obtained forgiveness of the same: the descendants of Adam are affected by that sin, but are not guilty of committing it; therefore they need no forgiveness, no faith, no repentance, no baptism for the remission of that sin: hence it is a solemn mockery before God to baptize little children; and God will not hold parents guiltless who suffer this abominable thing to be practiced in their families, and the Lord God will punish those men who practice this great wickedness in his name; for will the Lord receive at our hands that which he has not commanded? And will he suffer us to go unpunished, if we use his name in vain, and practice abominations in his name? Therefore, we say unto all such, let these evil practices cease from before the Lord, lest he smite you by the rod of his mouth, and by his wrath, and you perish out of the earth, and also from his presence.

79. Man, having learned good and evil by the fall, and having an atonement provided by which he became in his infant state innocent before God, was placed in a condition in which he could act for himself, either to do good or evil, and a probation was given him. Now, the Lord did not see proper to redeem man from the effects of the fall immediately; therefore, the time preceding death, became a probationary state, or a state of trial: laws were given to govern him, adapted to the nature and degree of his knowledge: he was commanded to do good and not evil; penalties were affixed to the laws given him. All mankind, as they grow up from infancy to years of accountability, transgress these laws and subject themselves to the penalty thereof, which is a second death. This second death will not be inflict-

ed until all mankind are redeemed from the first death, and restored in their immortal state into the presence of their Judge, to be judged by the revealed law, according to their works, whether they be good or evil. Were it not that Christ suffered for the sins committed by the posterity of Adam, as well as for the original sin, no flesh that sins could be saved; for sin conceives in the hearts of all as they grow up to know good and evil. Therefore, if the atonement reached no further than the original sin, every soul who sinned against the second law would die a second spiritual death: he would again be placed in a condition without hope; he would again perish from that which is good and become miserable, both body and spirit, forever: it is true, his body would not return the second time to dust, but he would be banished the second time from the presence of his Judge, where both body and spirit would be miserable forever; where no ray of hope could ever break upon his mind. Such must have been the consequences, if the original sin was the only sin atoned for: under these circumstances, none but infants and those who died without knowledge enough to sin, could be saved. All the rest would be irrecoverably lost.

80. But Christ died, not only to redeem mankind from the original sin, but to redeem them from the penalty of their own individual sins, not unconditionally, but conditionally. Though Christ has suffered both body and spirit, the pains of all the human family to atone for all their sins, yet this atonement cannot take effect upon them, unless they believe in Him, repent of their sins, and are immersed in water in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and are confirmed by the laying on of the hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, and continue in faithfulness unto the end; on such the second death will have no power. But those who will not repent and who reject the plan of salvation, must suffer the penalty of the law even according to the decree which God

hath made. Such will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. But as God will reward and punish all men according to their works, whether good or evil, there will be different degrees of happiness and glory to answer the ends of the atonement, and different degrees of punishment and misery to answer the ends of justice. And thus the love, and mercy, and justice of God will be magnified before all the heavenly host and before all men.

81. Redemption from the original sin is universal and unconditional; redemption from our personal sins is conditional. The first is brought about by free grace alone without works. The second is brought about by free grace through works. The former is a universal salvation; the latter is a salvation of those only who receive the gospel. Redemption from Adam's sin restores us back into the presence of God; redemption from our own sins retains us in the presence of God in a state of never ending happiness. Those who reject a redemption from the second death, will be compelled to receive a redemption from the first death. As Christ was lifted up by wicked men upon the cross, so shall wicked men be lifted up from the grave to stand before Him to be judged for all their wicked deeds. As Christ was judged and rejected by sinners, so shall sinners be judged and rejected by Him. Thus all things are planned in wisdom, in righteousness, and in holiness, for the redemption and happiness of man, and also for his damnation and misery; that mercy and justice may each have their claims, and God be perfect in all his attributes.

How great and wonderful are the works of the Almighty, as displayed in the creation and government of man! What infinite wisdom is manifested in his redemption! How great the inducements held out to fallen man to reclaim and restore him to happiness! How merciful, and yet how just is the great Judge of all

the earth, in meting out rewards and punishments, according to the works of men!

82. Having shown that man had a pre-existence in the heavens before the foundation of this world, that he was an intelligent moral agent, governed by laws, that he kept his first estate, that this earth was organized for his residence, wherein he had the privilege of being associated with a tabernacle or body, that this is the second estate, in which he encounters new trials under new conditions, which, if he overcomes, and keeps the higher laws, adapted to this state of being, will prepare him for a further advancement in the attributes and perfections of his Heavenly Father from whom he originated and by whom he was begotten, long anterior to his present existence; having shown that the fall was necessary that he might become like the Gods, knowing good and evil, and that redemption was necessary that he might know how to appreciate happiness, by its contrast with misery, we will next inquire into the nature, origin, and extent of his capacities as a moral and intelligent being.

83. *First.* What is the nature of the capacities of man? Man has the capacities of self-motion, of thinking, feeling, hating, loving, enjoying, suffering, remembering, reasoning, and many other qualities, too numerous to mention. Of all the qualities possessed by man, that of self-motion appears to us the most marvelous. All motions, excepting those of living beings, are said to be of a mechanical nature—that is, produced by matter's acting upon matter; all mechanical operations, in their origin, are the results of a living self-moving force. The great laws of nature, themselves, are the results of this force. There is no other force in the universe. Those qualities which are called mechanical forces, gravitating forces, chemical forces, &c., are not forces, but only effects. The force which produces these effects is hidden from the view of mortals. A living, intelligent, self-moving force,

is the origin of all the motions and laws of nature. Man has this capacity of self-motion, and exercises it to a small extent, in the moving of his limbs and body. But to enter into the investigation, in this treatise, of the nature of self-moving forces in general, would be foreign to the subject under consideration. For further information upon this interesting though recondite principle, our readers are referred to our treatise, entitled *Great First Cause, or the Self-Moving Forces of the Universe*. The nature of thinking, remembering, and all the other capacities of man which we have named, are already familiar to the understanding of every one. No one will dispute, but what man possesses all these qualities.

84. *Secondly*. Whence originated these capacities? When we speak of capacities we mean the original elementary capacities of the mind. We are well aware that metaphysicians consider many of the qualities named to be of a secondary or compound nature, growing out of the combinations of qualities still more original. All this we are willing to admit; but these secondary qualities, if analyzed, will be found in all instances to be the result of the combination of simple, elementary, original capacities. The question is, whence originated these elementary qualities of the mind? We answer, they are eternal. The capacities of all spiritual substance are eternal as the substance to which they belong. There is no substance in the universe which feels and thinks now, but what has eternally possessed that capacity. These capacities may be suspended for a season, but never can be annihilated. A substance which has not these capacities now, must eternally remain without them. The amount of matter in space can never be increased nor diminished, neither can there be a new elementary capacity added to this matter. For the arguments sustaining the eternity of matter and its capacities, see our treatise, referred to in the preceding paragraph. Admitting the eternity of the

capacities, then the materials of which our spirits are composed, must have been capable of thinking, moving, willing, &c., before they were organized in the womb of the celestial female. Preceding that period there was an endless duration, and each particle of our spirits had an eternal existence, and was in possession of eternal capacities. Now can it be supposed, for one moment, that these particles were inactive and dormant from all eternity until they received their organization in the form of the infant spirit? Can we suppose that particles, possessed of the power to move themselves, would not have exerted that power, during the endless duration preceding their organization? If they were once organized in the vegetable kingdom, and then disorganized by becoming the food of celestial animals, and then again re-organized in the form of the spirits of animals which is a higher sphere of being, then, is it unreasonable to suppose that the same particles have, from all eternity, been passing through an endless chain of unions and disunions, organizations and disorganizations, until at length they are permitted to enter into the highest and most exalted sphere of organization in the image and likeness of God? A transmigration of the same particles of spirits from a lower to a higher organization, is demonstrated from the fact that the same particles exist in a diffused scattered state, mingled with other matter; next, they exist in a united form, growing out of the earth in the shape of grass, herbs, and trees; and after this, these vegetables become food for celestial animals, and these same particles are organized into their offspring, and thus form the spirits of animals. Here, then, is apparently a transmigration of the same particles of spirit from an inferior to a superior organization, wherein their condition is improved, and their sphere of action enlarged. Who shall set any bounds to this upward tendency of spirit? Who shall prescribe limits to its progression?

If it abide the laws and conditions of its several states of existence, who shall say that it will not progress until it shall gain the very summit of perfection, and exist in all the glorious beauty of the image of God?

85. When, therefore, the infant spirit is first born in the heavenly world, that is not a commencement of its capacities. Each particle eternally existed prior to this organization: each was enabled to perceive its own existence; each had the power of self-motion; each would be an intelligent living being of itself, having no knowledge of the particular thoughts, feelings, and emotions of other particles with which it never had been in union. Each particle would be as independent of every other particle as one individual person is of another. In this independent separate condition, it would be capable of being governed by laws, adapted to the amount of knowledge and experience it had gained during its past eternal existence. Each particle that complies with the laws prescribed for its rule of action, is permitted to rise in the scale of existence; for, by obeying the law, it gains more knowledge, and is thus prepared to act in a higher sphere, and under a superior law. How many different laws these particles have acted under during the endless school of experience through which they have passed is not known to us. What degree of knowledge they have obtained by experience, previous to their organization in the womb of the celestial female, is not revealed. One thing is certain, the particles that enter into the organization of the infant spirit, are placed in a new sphere of action: the laws to govern them in this new and superior condition must be different from any laws under which they had previously acted.

86. The particles organized in an infant spirit, can no longer act, or feel, or think as independent individuals, but the law to control them in their new sphere, requires them to act, and feel, and think in union, and to be agreed in all things. When

the same feelings, the same thoughts, the same emotions, and the same affections, prevade every particle, existing in the union, the united individuals will consider themselves as one individual: the interest and welfare of each will be the interest and welfare of the whole: if one suffers, they all suffer: if one rejoices, they all rejoice: if one gains any information, it is communicated to all the rest: if one thinks, all the rest think in the same manner: if one feels, they all feel: in fine, the union of these particles is so perfect, that there can be no state or affection of one, but all the rest are immediately notified of it, and are thus by sympathy in the same state or affection. And, therefore, they live, and move, and think, and act as one being, though in reality, it is a being of beings. So far as the substance is concerned the spiritual body is a plurality of beings; so far as the attributes or qualities are considered, it is but one being. We should naturally suppose, that individual particles which have been accustomed to act in an individual capacity, would, at first, find it very difficult to act in perfect concord and agreement. Each individual particle must consent, in the first place, to be organized with other similar particles, and after the union has taken place, they must learn, by experience, the necessity of being agreed in all their thoughts, affections, desires, feelings, and acts, that the union may be preserved from all contrary or contending forces, and that harmony may pervade every department of the organized system. Now, to learn all this, there must be a law given of a superior nature to those by which they were formerly governed in their individual capacities as separate particles. A law regulating them when existing out of the organization, would be entirely unsuitable to their new sphere of existence. New laws are wanted, requiring each particle no longer to act in relation to its own individual self, but to act in relation to the welfare and happiness of every other particle in the grand union. All

disobedience to this law by any particle or particles in the organization, would necessarily bring its appropriate punishment: and thus by suffering the penalties of the law they would in process of time become martialled and disciplined to perform their appropriate functions in the spiritual system. The appropriate place for this grand school of experience, is in the Heavenly world, where, from the time of their birth as infant spirits, until the time that they are sent into this world to take fleshly tabernacles, the organized particles are instructed and educated in all the laws pertaining to their union, until they are made perfectly ONE in all their attributes and qualities; but not one in substance, for this would be impossible; each particle, though organized, maintains its own identity in the system. The oneness, therefore, can only consist in the sameness of the qualities which are attained by ages of experience through strict adherence to the wise and judicious laws, given to govern them in their united capacity.

87. The particles organized in an infant spirit, before they had learned the necessity of being perfectly agreed might bring themselves into many disagreeable circumstances which, by a perfect agreement, might have been avoided. For instance, one law of the union is, that when any part of the system has ignorantly, or in any other way placed itself in disagreeable circumstances, the other part shall take warning and endeavor to avoid those circumstances. To illustrate this law, suppose the particles, composing the right hand of a spirit, were placed in contact with certain substances which produced great pain, the perception of this pain is immediately communicated to the particles, composing the left hand, they, being inexperienced, give no heed to the friendly warning, and venture into the same difficulty as those in the right hand; they now

feel pained, and learn by experience, or by the things which they suffer, that they have violated one of the laws of their union. This places the particles on their guard, and they learn to respect the communications which any portion of the system conveys to the other; they learn that the same thing which will inflict pain on one part of the system, will also inflict pain upon the particles in any other part; and thus when the communication is made from one part of the system to the other, the particles have confidence in the intelligence conveyed, and act accordingly. This confidence is gained by experience. The particles learn by experience that to violate any law given to govern them in their united capacity brings punishment and misery. It is by experience that they learn to act, and feel, and think, alike; it is by experience that they learn to love and hate alike. However unlike they may be in the degrees of knowledge and experience which they had accumulated previous to their union, they, by being placed in the same organization, are schooled alike, and trained, disciplined, and educated alike, till every particle has the knowledge and experience of every other particle, and thus by experience they learn to be united in all things, and to act with one will in all their operations. To see the perfect union which now exists among the particles, composing our spirits, as manifested in thoughts, feelings, desires, and operations, one would almost think that these were the manifestations of one single being or particle, instead of a plurality of beings or particles. But a little reflection, will correct this false impression, and show us that these are the manifestations of the same attributes or qualities, dwelling in millions of particles but yielding obedience to the same great laws, ordained for the government of the organized union.

(To be continued.)

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE.

(Continued.)

The multiplication of human beings is not the only object of marriage, but connected with this is the righteous government of those beings. If increase alone were the design, then it could be accomplished through the wicked as well as the righteous; but we have already proved that God is not pleased with the increase of the wicked: the cause of this displeasure arises from the unrighteous government exercised in their families. A wicked man is totally unqualified to govern a family according to the law of righteousness; for though he deliver righteous precepts, his wicked examples preach louder in the ears of his family than his precepts. If precepts have no influence in regulating the conduct of the parents, how can it be expected that they shall regulate the acts of the children? If parents will not repent of their sins, and call upon the Lord, and be baptized into the Church of Christ, and receive the Holy Ghost, and be diligent in obeying every requirement of Heaven, the children will be very likely to harden their hearts also. Children are susceptible of influences; those whom they esteem most they will be the most likely to imitate. And as children generally suppose their parents to be superior to all others, they are very apt to be controlled by their influence, either for good or for bad. Hence, the wise man says, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Parents cannot train children in the proper path, unless they walk therein themselves. Therefore no individuals or nations are divinely authorized to marry and multiply their species, unless they are qualified to govern them according to the law of God, and to teach them both by example and precept the way that leads to eternal life and happiness.

The salvation or damnation of a family depends, in a very great degree, upon the nature of the govern-

ment exercised in that family. If the head of a family be a righteous man, his influence is continually exercised in every department of his house; his wife or wives are continually instructed in every good, and useful, and upright principle; his children are taught in the law of God according to their age, experience, and capacities; his examples are imitated; his whole household love, revere, and obey him: he leads them unto God and teaches them how to be happy here and hereafter; he obtains promises from the Almighty for them and their generations after them; he blesses them by the spirit of prophecy according to the power and inspiration of the Holy Ghost that is in him; and in fine, he is a prophet, patriarch, prince, and saviour to all that God has given him. Such a man is worthy of a family; he has a divine right to marry, and multiply his offspring; for he thus, in training up a family, glorifies God; he prepares them to associate with a higher order of beings in the Heavens; through his instrumentality they are made partakers of eternal life. Contrast such an order of family government with the unrighteousness and disorder in the families of the wicked; and, then, tell me, if such a man is not more worthy of a hundred wives and a thousand children, than the wicked are to be entrusted with one? Tell me if such a man would not glorify God more, in the salvation of a large and numerous family than the wicked man who is the instrument of bringing damnation upon his family? Hear what is said concerning Abraham. "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do

justice and judgment ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him. (Gen. 18 : 17-19.) The Lord and two angels had just taken dinner with Abraham, and as they started on their journey towards Sodom "Abraham went with them to bring them on the way." The Lord concluded to reveal to Abraham a secret concerning the destruction of Sodom. The reason assigned for revealing this secret to him, was because he would "command his children and his household;" and because of this He would bring upon him all that he had promised. Thus we see that in consequence of the good order and righteous government which this Polygamist exercised in his family, he was counted worthy to have the Lord and his angels to dine with him ; to receive a revelation concerning the fate of the neighboring cities ; and to learn that the Lord would actually make him a great nation, and that all nations should be blessed in him. All these great blessings were bestowed as a reward for commanding his children and household according to the law of God. On the other hand, great and terrible were the judgments which came upon Sodom and the surrounding cities, because they would not command their children in righteousness, nor give heed themselves to the law of God.

And even among the people of God there is a distinction, arising from the faithfulness of some and the unfaithfulness of others. Those who are the most upright are better qualified to govern families than those who are unfaithful. Though the Lord had made promises to Jacob concerning the posterity of his twelve sons, yet because of their wickedness while in the wilderness He came very near destroying them. The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under Heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.." (Deut. 9 : 13, 14.) Why did the Lord wish to destroy

them and make the posterity of Moses into a nation greater than they? Because Moses was more righteous than they, and consequently was much better qualified to instruct and teach his children than all Israel; and the Lord had a great desire to bless those who were the most faithful with a numerous posterity; while those among his people who transgressed were considered unworthy of standing at the head of a numerous offspring. Had not Moses plead before the Lord in behalf of Israel, and referred to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, the Lord might have destroyed them, and raised up a mighty nation by Moses in their stead. But the Lord hearkened unto Moses and "repented of the evil which He thought to do unto his people." (Ex. 33.)

Abram had a numerous household, before Sarah gave Hagar to him for a wife. We read of three hundred and eighteen trained servants "born in his own house." (Gen, 14 : 14.) Now it is altogether likely that Abram was more righteous and faithful than all the church in his house; hence, he was the only one among them that we have any account of having more than one wife. His faithfulness and his qualifications to instruct and govern in righteousness, entitled him to greater privileges.

The Lord blessed Gideon because he was a mighty man of God with upwards of seventy sons, and chose him to deliver Israel.

David, being a man after God's own heart, took seven wives before he ascended the throne to reign over all Israel. He being a prophet was well qualified to govern and instruct a family in righteousness. He had more wives and children committed to him than many of his brethren because he was better qualified to lead them to salvation. After David had taken seven wives, the Lord thinking that he had not yet a sufficient number, gave into his bosom all of Saul's wives. (2 Sam. 12 : 8.) What is the secret of the Lord's being so anxious for David to have

so many wives? Because, he, being a man after God's own heart, would be more likely to save his wives and children, than many others of Israel who were less faithful.

But when David turned from his righteousness and took Uriah's wife, the Lord now considered him no longer worthy of his wives and He gave them to his neighbor. He was informed by the Lord through Nathan, the Prophet, that if Saul's wives and that which He had already given to him "had been too little," "I would moreover" he says, "have given unto thee such and such things;" (2 Sam. 12: 8.) clearly intimating that, He, the Lord, would have given him more, lawfully, if he had been faithful. But now he had forfeited all that he had got. Saul, though he had been a prophet, afterwards transgressed and rendered himself unworthy of his kingdom—unworthy of his wives—and unworthy of even life itself. Wives and children are among the greatest blessings bestowed upon the righteous. He, therefore, that receives these blessings and continues faithful, will be counted worthy to receive more; but he that is unfaithful will have taken from him even that which he has. This was the case with Saul and David; their wives were taken from them. David by taking that which did not belong to him, lost all his own.

God raised up Solomon to sit upon the throne of Israel; and He appeared unto him twice and gave him great wisdom above all others and the Lord was with him, and magnified him exceedingly before all Israel, and hearkened unto his prayer and filled the temple which he built with a cloud of glory, and caused fire to descend from Heaven to consume the sacrifice. This great man was much better calculated to train up children in the way that they should go than any other man living, for God had given him greater wisdom; hence he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. (1 Kings, 11.) But even this wise man, turned away

from the Lord, by taking wives from among surrounding nations who were idolaters which thing the Lord had expressly forbidden. (See verses 1, 2.) Solomon was not condemned for marrying many wives of his own nation; but having transgressed the strict commandment of God in marrying out of his nation, he was left unto himself and turned away after the idolatrous gods of his wives; and God rent the kingdom in twain in the days of his son, and gave ten tribes to another not of his seed.

Thus it will be seen that even among the people of God there are some who are more worthy than others, consequently God gave such more wives and children than He did to others. These blessings were dispensed, like all other blessings, according to the righteousness, wisdom, faith, holiness and qualifications of those who professed to be the people of God. Some receiving more; some less; some none at all; and some having taken from them even those they had received.

Therefore though the males and females had been of equal number in Israel, yet God would confer upon some more than upon others, according to their worthiness. As it was among Israel, so it is among the people of Utah. Some are entitled to a greater number of wives than others, because of their righteousness. Though the census should show an equal number of the sexes in that Territory, that does not prove that all the men are equally qualified to instruct, counsel, govern, and lead wives and children in the paths of righteousness. A father would not confer upon his children equal blessings, authority, and power, unless they were equally faithful. A wise king having many sons would confer authority and power upon such only as would use the same for the benefit of the people. Those who would not be subject to good laws themselves, he would not entrust to govern others. Our Heavenly Father acts upon the same principle. He is willing that all should enjoy equal rights and

privileges, upon the ground of equal obedience. We have this illustrated in the parable of the talents: one having one; another two, and another five. Those who made a proper use of what was entrusted to them, gained more: those who made an improper use of their blessings, lost all they had: their blessings were taken from them and given to others, who had more abundantly. This explains the mystery why the Lord in ancient times gave more wives to one than what he did to another, when to all appearance the number of males and females were about equal.

And when the most of His people were righteous and worthy to be entrusted with numerous families, and there were not a sufficient number of females to supply them with a plurality of wives, the Lord provided for them, by commanding them to spare the female captives of certain nations taken in war. Hence when the Israelites made war against Midian they slew all the men, and took the women and children captives. Moses afterwards commanded them as follows: "Kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." (Numbers, 31: 17, 18.)

This was made a law among Israel in all their wars against foreign cities and nations. Moses said concerning the city that would not make peace with Israel, "Thou shalt besiege it: and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword; but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations." (Deut. 20: 12, 15.) If Israel kept the law which was given

them, they must have accumulated hundreds of thousands of female captives for themselves. But why were they commanded to preserve the females and not the males? Because the Lord was very anxious that His people should have a plurality of wives, for they were the only people qualified on the face of the whole earth to raise up children in righteousness; therefore the Lord took particular care to make such provisions as would constitute Israel a nation of polygamists.

The male is appointed by the authority of God to be at the head of his family—to be a Patriarch and Saviour unto them. If the male children of these nations had been spared alive, they would have remembered their fathers, and as they grew up they would have turned away to the idolatry and abominations of their fathers; and if they had married wives among Israel, they would have been instruments not only in ruining themselves, but their families also. But not so with the females who were spared alive. They would be connected in marriage with good men, to whom they would be subject, and their children also; and the man, being at the head of the family, would, by his good examples and precepts, save all his wives and children. Hence we see the wisdom of God in destroying the males and saving the women for his people; that they, by having a great number of wives, might multiply the chosen seed as the stars of Heaven.

The number of the children of Israel compared with the number of families, shows that polygamy must have been practiced to a very great extent while they were in the wilderness. Moses was commanded to take the number of all the males from twenty years old and upwards that were able to go forth to war. (Numbers, 1: 2, 3.) The number was found to be six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty, (verse 46.) It is very likely that the number of males under twenty years would, when added to the others, in-

crease the same to about one million. The number of females, it is most likely, was far greater, as the Egyptians upwards of forty years before had commenced destroying the male children. The whole nation of Israel, therefore, must have been something near two and one-half millions. Now, how many first born males were there in this numerous host? Answer: only twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three. (See Numbers, 3: 43.) Hence there was among the whole number of males only an average of one out of thirty-nine that was the first born. How can that be possible? It could not be possible only upon the principle of a plurality of wives existing in almost every family; for each woman could not have had thirty-nine sons; and it must be recollected that only one out of this number could be the first born. Now, a man that had four wives might possibly have thirty-nine sons; in this case there would be only one out of the number who could be the first born. The first born has relation only to the man who is the head of the family, and not to the woman. Though Jacob had four wives and twelve sons, yet Reuben only was called the first born. It may be said that there were many families whose first born were daughters: of this there is no doubt. Admit that the two classes of families were equal, still there would be only forty-four thousand five hundred and forty-six families having children in all Israel; taking into consideration those families that had no children, the whole number of families in Israel could not have exceeded fifty thousand. Now, two and one-half millions of people must have all been included in fifty thousand families, which would be an average of just fifty to a family. As one wife could not be the mother of forty-eight children, it shows most conclusively that nearly every family in Israel must have practiced polygamy. As each man's family consisted, at least, of fifty persons, and if five children be allowed as an average to each wife, then each man's family

must have consisted of about eight wives and forty children. There is no getting away from these scriptural proofs in favor of polygamy. No person can explain upon any other principle, how there could be only twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three first born males in a nation whose population, at a very low estimate, must have numbered two and one-half millions.

At the highest estimate, there could not have been over fifty thousand married men in Israel at that time, and yet there must have been something like three or four hundred thousand married women. The number of married men is approximately estimated from the number of first born males. And the number of married women is approximately estimated from the whole number of Israel.

At the above estimate the number of males remaining unmarried would amount to about nine hundred and fifty thousand; of this number there would be upwards of five hundred and fifty thousand over twenty years of age, not married; while the number of unmarried females would be about eleven or twelve hundred thousand.

Of those males who were old enough to marry, as an average, only one out of twelve had a family. There must be some cause for this. Can any one give a reasonable cause? Can any one tell why only about one-twelfth part of the men at that time had families? Have we not reason to believe that only this small proportion of the men were worthy of wives or children? Why were fifty thousand men blessed with some three or four hundred thousand wives, while upwards of five hundred and fifty thousand had none at all? We cannot answer this question, only upon the principle that God gives wives and children in great abundance to his faithful servants, and withholds them from the unfaithful, for fear that they will increase an unrighteous posterity upon the earth. Should God deal with the saints in Utah upon the same principle now,

that He did in ancient times, it would be nothing strange if He should give to many of His faithful servants a hundred fold of wives and children; while others, less faithful, would be limited to one, and others still have none at all, like the great majority of Israel in the wilderness.

If any one should say that the manner in which God dispensed His blessings under the Mosaic dispensations, is not applicable under the gospel. In reply, we ask, Is it any more pleasing in the sight of God for a wicked man to bring up a family in wickedness under the gospel dispensation than it was under former dispensations? Are not the evil consequences the same under every dispensation? Is there not just as much danger of a wicked man's bringing ruin and eternal misery upon his family under the gospel as well as under the law? If, then, God is now, just as much displeased with a family reared in wickedness; and if there is the same danger of destroying the immortal souls of the offspring now, as under the Mosaic dispensation, then why should it be thought strange that God should use the same preventatives now that He did anciently, to check the increase of the wicked, and the same facilities to greatly increase the families of the righteous? Why should it be considered unreasonable that God should give many wives and children to those who would in righteousness command their households, as Abraham did, and withhold these blessings from others who are unworthy?

These testimonies and arguments effectually demolish the great objection to a plurality of wives, founded upon the equality of the numbers of males and females in Utah. It will be seen, that if the males in that territory were five times more numerous than the females, still the foregoing arguments would show the necessity of a plurality of wives; unless it can be proved that all the males in that territory are equally faithful, and consequently equally worthy to be entrusted with these great blessings.

But the question may be asked, Who is to decide upon the worthiness or unworthiness of the people? We answer, the same Being who always decided all matters of importance among His people. But is there not great danger of being deceived? Yes; there is very great danger, indeed, of being deceived, unless you believe in a God who gives revelation now as He did in ancient times. All the nations of the earth have always been deceived when they got so far from God that He would not speak to them; they are then left to follow their own imaginations, which are sure to deceive them. But when God speaks there is no chance of deception. His sheep know His voice and will follow Him; hence it is not possible for the elect to be deceived; because they converse with God, and He never deceives any one. If the people of Utah are the people of God, then there is no possible chance of their being deceived upon any subject of as great importance as that of the plurality of wives; for no man has a right to these blessings unless God shall give them to him through His servant the prophet. But, on the other hand, if the people of Utah have no prophet, then they are not the people of God, but are deceived like all the rest of Christendom who are without prophets. In the latter case, we would not be worthy of even one wife, much less a plurality. A people that have no prophets or inspired men among them, never were worthy of wives or children in any age of the world. Hence if the people of Utah cannot inquire of God and receive revelations from Him, they are no more entitled to wives and children than Apostate Christendom are. The righteousness or unrighteousness of having a plurality of wives, or even one wife, all hangs upon the simple question, Whether the people who presume to marry, are, or are not, the people of God? If they are not, they have no divine right to even one wife; if they are His people He has the undoubted right to show, through His prophet,

how many wives, if any, each may have.

But would it be right for the Latter-Day Saints to marry a plurality of wives in any of the States, or Territories, or nations, where such practices are prohibited by the laws of man? We answer no: it would not be right; for we are commanded to be subject to the powers that be. So long as we live under their jurisdiction, we are commanded to keep their laws, unless their laws are unrighteous, like those given by Nebuchadnezzar, commanding all people to fall down and worship a golden image which he had caused to be set up; we then should, no doubt, rebel as the three Hebrews did. But all laws which we could keep without violating our consciences, it is our duty to obey so long as we live under them. The laws enacted by the different States and Territories against the plurality of wives, we believe to be unconstitutional, growing out of the narrow-contracted bigoted customs of Apostate Christianity, nevertheless it is the duty of the saints so long as they remain under such illiberal laws to strictly comply with them. But if they wish to enjoy the privileges granted by the word of God, and by the glorious Constitution of our National Republic, let them depart from under the jurisdiction of these illiberal State laws, and go to Utah where religious liberty is tolerated, and where every people and sect have the right to worship as they please, and marry as many wives as they please, and be accountable to God and not to man.

Laws are intended to prevent crime, and the revealed law of God, and the light of conscience are abundantly sufficient to determine what is crime. A well instructed conscience will not determine anything to be crime which is not inconsistent with the revealed law. As plurality of wives is perfectly consistent with the revealed law, it is not a crime; and therefore no human laws should denounce it as such: but every man should be left perfectly free in regard

to this thing, so far as human laws are concerned.

Every enlightened conscience, as well as the word of God, will tell us that lying, stealing, robbing, false swearing, committing adultery, trespassing, murdering, and many other similar acts, are crimes; and therefore the legislative departments should enact wise and judicious laws for their punishment. But where in the word of God is the plurality of wives denounced as a crime? Nowhere: but on the contrary, it was approbated of God. Shall human wisdom, then, presume to enact laws against that which is nowhere in the divine oracles condemned as a crime? Must we, under the broad folds of the American Constitution, be compelled to bow down to the narrow contracted notions of Apostate Christianity? Must we shut up our consciences in a nut shell, and be compelled to submit to the bigoted notions, and whims, and customs of the dark ages of popery, transferred to us through the superstitions of our fathers? Must we be slaves to custom and render homage to the soul-destroying, sickening influences of modern Christianity? No: American freedom was never instituted for such servile purposes; the Constitution of our country was never framed to crush the conscience of man, and put upon him the iron yoke of Romish superstition; our illustrious fathers never fought and bled to bequeath to their children the heritage of freedom mingled with despotism; the proud American eagle was never made to stretch forth its wings and soar aloft to mock the sons of freedom's soil. Liberty—unbounded liberty of conscience should characterize the laws of each of the States of this great and extended Union. Here the Hindoo or the Chinese should be permitted to bow down and worship the idolatrous gods of their fathers, unmolested and unharmed, so long as they are guilty of no crimes, and do nothing calculated to injure society. Under a theocratical form of government an idolater would be punished with death; for

idolatry is a great crime in the sight of God. A theocracy would consider all religions, except one, criminal, and would limit and circumscribe all but one. But the government of this nation is not a theocracy; it is intended to give religious freedom to all; to carry out these views, the various religions among pagan nations should be tolerated here, and their followers receive the same protection by law as the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, or any other society. If any religion which does not conflict with the Constitution of the country is to be prohibited, the same rule will prohibit all others. So long, therefore, as the present form of this Republican Government is our standard, let the religions of all nations be equally protected. And if any among the nations of Asia or Africa, or of the islands of the sea, consider it right to have a plurality of wives, and wish to emigrate with their numerous families, and become citizens of this great Republic, they ought to have that privilege, without being compelled by the unconstitutional State laws, to break up their families and divorce all their wives but one. The present illiberal State laws virtually forbid emigration from about four-fifths of the nations of the earth, and yet it is pretended that our country is an asylum for all nations. But let them try it once, and they will soon find our prisons filled with sincere but unfortunate polygamists: they will soon find that, with the exception of one, all their wives, however dear to their hearts, will be torn from their embrace. Is this freedom and liberty! Is this the kind asylum held out to the oppressed of all nations!! Must they relinquish the dearest and most sacred rights ever enjoyed by man, and break asunder the family

ties of conjugal affection and love, in order to be made partakers of our hospitality? Boast not, O proud America, of the liberality of thy institutions, when such illiberal laws as these curse thy soil! After having been subjected to the loss of his family, well might the honest patriarchal orientalist exclaim, "Give me my wives and my children, and let America keep her proffered liberty for others, whose minds are already trammelled under the whims and superstitions of Papist and Protestant religions! Give me my wives and my children, and I will return to my native country, where the sacred rights of the domestic circle are not invaded and torn assunder by legislative enactments! Give me my wives and my children, for without them the sound of liberty has lost its sweetness in my ear! Give me my wives and my children, and I am willing to endure the hardships of the Old World, in order to escape from the restrictive, superstitious, oppressive laws of the New!" These would be the feelings of millions of the inhabitants of the Old World, should they emigrate to our country and have their families broken up, and they imprisoned for polygamy by our unconstitutional State laws. Why will not American citizens, then, rise up with one accord and repeal those illiberal oppressive laws, and let the liberties bequeathed to us by the choice blood of our illustrious ancestors be enjoyed to their fullest extent? Why will not America welcome the oppressed, downtrodden sons of the Old World to enjoy the luxuries of our soil, and the great privileges of our sacred Constitution, without tearing from their embrace that which is dearer than life, the moment that they set foot upon our shores?

(To be continued.)

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